

PEEL 2021/22

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of Cleveland Police

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Overall summary

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Cleveland Police is in 11 areas of policing. We make graded judgments in 10 of these 11 as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Recording data about crime	Treatment of the public	Investigating crime	Preventing crime
		Responding to the public	Protecting vulnerable people	Good use of resources
		Disrupting serious organised crime	Developing a positive workplace	
		Managing offenders		

We also inspected how effective a service Cleveland Police gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment in this overall area.

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

Data in this report

For more information, please [view this report on our website](#) and select the 'About the data' section.

Important changes to PEEL

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach and during the past year we have seen the most significant changes yet.

We now use a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. For instance, we have integrated our rolling crime data integrity inspections into these PEEL assessments. Our PEEL victim service assessment also includes a crime data integrity element in at least every other assessment. We have also changed our approach to graded judgments. We now assess forces against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2021/22](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to [causes of concern](#) and areas for improvement. We have also expanded our previous four-tier system of judgments to five tiers. As a result, we can state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and highlight more effectively the best ways of doing things.

However, these changes mean that it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this round of PEEL inspections with those from previous years. A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we say so in the report.

HM Inspector's observations

I recognise that Cleveland Police has faced numerous challenges over several years. These have caused its status to remain at 'engage' as part of our monitoring regime for a sustained period. Instability within the [chief officer](#) team and demand pressures, as described in this report, have both contributed to this position.

This report outlines the concerns I have about the performance of Cleveland Police in keeping people safe and reducing crime. But I am pleased with how the force has improved since the arrival of the current chief constable who, with the support of the office of the [police and crime commissioner](#), has brought greater stability to the force. Further progress has been significantly hampered by the difficulties in recruiting a senior team to support him. This is despite considerable effort and is due to national issues outside his control.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the force over the last year.

The force has significantly improved its crime recording

I am pleased to find that the force has made considerable improvements in its crime recording. It has introduced processes to make sure that crime recording is more accurate. This means that the force is now properly recording a substantial majority of the crimes reported by the public.

The force has improved its fair treatment of the public

The force has made good progress in improving how it records the use of force and its understanding of how it uses stop and search. This means that members of the public can have greater confidence in how the force uses powers that can affect them the most.

The force recognises vulnerability at first contact

The force has worked hard since its 2019 inspection to improve how it recognises [vulnerability](#). This is particularly evident at first contact with the consistent application of [THRIVE](#) (threat, harm, risk, investigation opportunities and vulnerability), the implementation of a vulnerability desk in the control room and good use of technology to identify repeat callers.

The force has integrated an ethical culture

Ethics and standards of behaviour were an area of specific concern following the force's 2019 inspection. I am pleased with how Cleveland Police has improved in this area. In particular, it has created an effective ethics and standards board and recruited ethics advocates throughout the workforce.

The force needs to review its neighbourhood policing resourcing and deployment model

The force is still recovering from the redeployment of its neighbourhood policing resources prior to its 2019 inspection. Demand has continued to rise while the force's capacity for prevention has been greatly reduced. This means neighbourhood officers and [staff](#) are routinely taken away from their primary duties to support immediate response. This prevents them from engaging with the community. The chief constable is aware of this and has invited a [peer review](#) to support the development plans in this area.

The force needs to get better at investigating reported crimes

The force needs to improve how it investigates crimes. Some investigations lack a structured plan and appropriate supervision to help follow lines of inquiry promptly and proportionately. The force should keep victims at the heart of investigations by consistently following the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) and maintaining auditable records of victims' wishes.

The force needs to improve its understanding of hidden harm and work more closely with partner organisations

I am pleased with how the force has improved the way it [protects vulnerable people](#). But more needs to be done to equip officers to look beyond what is immediately obvious when assessing a person's vulnerability. It shouldn't be a test for a person to convince the police they are vulnerable but a test for the service to assure themselves a person isn't. The force should make sure its officers and staff have the knowledge and confidence to fully explore the potential for a person to be at risk of harm. This is especially important when dealing with incidents involving children.

The force is developing how it plans and manages organisational efficiency

The force is undergoing significant change and restructuring as part of the chief constable's long-term plans. He is aware of the inefficiencies in the organisational management, which have contributed to the workforce being unable to meet demand. The force's clear direction and long-term plan will take time to develop and bring about the changes needed, but I have already noticed some improvements.

My report sets out the fuller findings of this inspection. The challenges facing Cleveland Police shouldn't be underestimated, but I am optimistic that the trajectory and pace of improvement will continue this year. I will continue to closely monitor the force's progress.



Andy Cooke

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Reducing crime assessment

We have identified seven themes underpinning a force's ability to reduce crime effectively which, taken together, allow an assessment of the extent to which the force is doing all it can to reduce crime. This is a narrative assessment, as police-recorded crime figures can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to make comparisons over time.

Cleveland Police has made a good investment in analytical software and produces an impressive range of data. Analysts use this to establish areas where crime needs to be reduced so senior leaders can act. But the force doesn't always have enough insight to understand the strategic risks and decide what measures are needed to control these.

The force has also invested in a range of supporting roles to help reduce crime. However, a lack of direction and investment in training has frustrated postholders and, despite their commitment, has affected their ability to meet that objective.

Other factors contributing to the force's ability to reduce crime are:

- a significant improvement in recording crime;
- diversion activities in custody to support those vulnerable to drug misuse;
- early identification of vulnerability at first contact; and
- the use of ancillary powers to prevent further offending.

I am pleased that the force is addressing some of the right areas of policing to reduce crime.

But the following areas may negatively affect the force's ability to reduce crime:

- Too often, dedicated neighbourhood officers are removed from their primary duties to give support to response policing teams. This affects the force's ability to build effective relationships with people and solve problems in the community.
- The force doesn't investigate all crime effectively, which means that some offenders escape justice and some victims don't get the end result they should.
- The force isn't always proactive in managing its outstanding suspects. This means further offences could be committed before suspects are apprehended.
- Officers don't always attend incidents promptly, and crime scene management isn't of a consistent standard.
- The force doesn't have enough capacity and capability in its investigation teams to meet demand.

Until the force improves how it solves community problems and investigates crime, it won't be able to effectively reduce crime.

Providing a service to victims of crime

Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service victims receive from Cleveland Police, from the point of reporting a crime through to the end result.

When the police close a case of a reported crime, it will be assigned what is referred to as an 'outcome type'. This describes the reason for closing it.

We reviewed 20 cases each when the following outcome types were used:

- A suspect was identified, and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevented further action ([outcome 15](#)).
- A suspect was identified, but there were evidential difficulties, and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action ([outcome 16](#)).
- A suspect wasn't identified, and the investigation was closed (outcome 18).

While this assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

The force needs to continue to improve the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls

When a victim contacts the police, it is important that their call is answered quickly and that the right information is recorded accurately on police systems. The caller should be spoken to in a professional manner. The information should be assessed, taking into consideration threat, harm, risk, and vulnerability. The victim should also receive appropriate [safeguarding](#) advice.

The force has improved the time it takes to answer emergency and non-emergency calls although it isn't yet consistently answering these within the required time frames. When calls are answered, the victim's vulnerability is assessed using a structured process. Call handlers give victims advice on crime prevention and on how to preserve evidence.

The force doesn't always respond promptly to calls for service

A force should aim to respond to calls for service within its published time frames, based on the prioritisation given to the call. It should change call priority only if the original prioritisation is deemed inappropriate, or if further information suggests a change is needed. The response should take into consideration risk and victim vulnerability, including information obtained after the call.

In most cases, the force responds to calls appropriately. But it doesn't always respond within set time frames. Victims weren't always told about delays and therefore their expectations weren't always met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage from the process.

Crime recording is good and is overseen by senior leaders, and victims receive an appropriate level of service

The force's crime recording should be trustworthy. It should be effective at recording reported crime in line with national standards and have effective systems and processes, supported by the necessary leadership and culture.

The force has effective crime-recording processes to make sure that all crimes reported to it are recorded correctly and without delay.

We set out more details about the force's crime recording in the crime data integrity section below.

The force makes sure that investigations are allocated to staff with suitable levels of experience

Police forces should have a policy to make sure crimes are allocated to appropriately trained officers or staff for investigation or, if appropriate, not investigated further. The policy should be applied consistently. The victim of the crime should be kept informed of the allocation and whether the crime is to be further investigated.

We found the force allocated recorded crimes for investigation according to its policy. In nearly all cases, the crime was allocated to the most appropriate department for further investigation.

The force doesn't always carry out effective and prompt investigations

Police forces should investigate reported crimes quickly, proportionately and thoroughly. Victims should be kept updated about the investigation, and the force should have effective governance arrangements to make sure investigation standards are high.

The force doesn't always carry out investigations promptly or complete all relevant and proportionate lines of inquiry. Some investigations aren't well supervised, and victims aren't always regularly updated. Victims are more likely to have confidence in police investigations when they receive regular updates.

A thorough investigation increases the likelihood of perpetrators being identified and a positive end result for the victim. But victim personal statements aren't always taken, which would give victims the opportunity to describe how crime has affected their lives.

When a victim withdraws support for an investigation, the force doesn't always consider progressing the case without their support. This can be an important way to safeguard the victim and prevent further offences from being committed.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime requires forces to carry out a needs assessment at an early stage to determine whether a victim needs additional support. But the force doesn't always carry out these assessments.

The force doesn't always assign the right outcome type, and the victim's wishes aren't always considered or an auditable record made

The force should make sure it follows national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome of each report of crime. In deciding the outcome, the force should consider the nature of the crime, the offender and the victim. And the force should show the necessary leadership and culture to make sure the use of outcomes is appropriate.

When a suspect has been identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action, the victim should be informed of the decision to close the investigation. Victims weren't always informed of the decision to take no further action and to close the investigation. The force used outcome 15 incorrectly on several occasions.

When a suspect has been identified but the victim doesn't support or withdraws their support for police action, an auditable record from the victim should be held confirming their decision. This will allow the investigation to be closed. In some cases, evidence of the victim's decision was missing. This means their wishes may not be fully represented and considered before an investigation is closed.

When an investigation has been completed and no suspect has been identified, the victim should be informed of the decision to close the investigation. But we found the victim wasn't always told about the decision to close the investigation.

Crime data integrity

Good

Cleveland Police is good at recording crime.

We estimate that Cleveland Police is recording 96.4 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.0 percent) of all reported crime (excluding fraud). This is a statistically significant improvement compared with the findings from our previous 2021 inspection, where we found that 89.9 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.6 percent) of all reported crimes were recorded. We estimate that, compared to the findings of our 2021 inspection, the force recorded an additional 4,700 crimes for the year covered by our inspection. We estimate that the force failed to record more than 2,600 crimes during the year covered by our inspection.

We estimate that the force is recording 93.7 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.2 percent) of violent offences. This is a statistically significant improvement compared with the findings from our previous 2021 inspection, where we found that 84.2 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.6 percent) of violent offences were recorded.

We estimate that the force is recording 96.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 3.5 percent) of sexual offences. This is broadly unchanged compared with the findings from our previous 2021 inspection, where we found that 97.1 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.9 percent) of sexual offences were recorded.

Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force provides a service to victims of crime.

The force has significantly improved how it records crime

Cleveland Police now correctly records almost all crimes reported to it. This helps make sure that victims receive the service they expect and deserve from the police. Although there are instances where a crime isn't recorded correctly, the force's crime records, overall, give a more accurate and complete picture of crime data. And this helps the force provide an effective service to local communities.

The force cancels rape crimes transparently

When crimes of rape have been recorded in error and when additional verifiable information comes to light which determines a crime didn't occur, the force identifies and cancels them correctly. The force does this through a robust process which the force crime registrar's team manages effectively. This makes sure the force has a more accurate picture of rape crimes reported to it.

The force doesn't always record crimes against vulnerable victims

Crimes against vulnerable victims aren't always recorded. Most of the unrecorded crimes were assaults against vulnerable adults. When the crime wasn't recorded, there was often no investigation. Failure to record these crimes can result in perpetrators not being identified or brought to justice.

Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect

Adequate

Cleveland Police is adequate at treating people fairly and with respect.

Innovative practice

The force is working to understand and improve the way it uses force

The force makes good use of [body-worn video](#) to improve how it treats the public. The force's review and assurance team views samples of cases where use of force isn't known to have been used but might have been expected. This helps the force better understand how consistent officers are in reporting their use of force. The process has had a positive effect on officers' understanding of when to report using force. In the year ending 31 March 2021, there was a 37 percent increase in recorded use of force incidents compared to the previous year.

Areas for improvement

The force needs to improve how it communicates with the public, making sure messages align with force and community priorities, and responses are monitored

The force has an established communications department but has been without a senior communications officer for some time. This post was recruited into temporarily during our inspection. We found some areas of the force website were out of date. And information on topics linked to public confidence, such as stop and search, wasn't always regularly updated. Ward newsletters are published on the website, but details of engagement events aren't always easy to see. The force uses social media platforms, but messaging isn't consistently aligned with force or local priorities. [Neighbourhood policing teams](#) have access to their own social media accounts, but these aren't used consistently, and the communications department has limited oversight. We found some evidence that the force monitors public responses to messages, but this happened ad hoc and when capacity allowed. Live monitoring is unrealistic, but it is important that responses are monitored to help the force's understanding of communities' needs and expectations.

The force needs to improve how it involves the community in local policing activity

The force maintains a cohort of special constables and offers cadet and mini police initiatives to young people. It also has a small cohort of 16 police service volunteers (PSVs). But there is a lack of strategic direction in how the force uses PSVs. The force has recruited a volunteer co-ordinator, but we found no evidence of a PSV recruitment strategy aligned with local priorities or areas of need. Despite significant capacity issues across the force, we also found limited evidence that senior leaders have given serious consideration to how PSVs could support their area of responsibility. Not only is this an important way to involve the community but it can also lead to a better understanding of what matters to them. The force is currently missing an opportunity to understand community perspective and learn from that insight.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to treating people fairly and with respect.

The force has improved how it engages with its communities

Cleveland is a diverse area with emerging refugee communities and an international student population. To help meet the differing needs of the local communities, the force has appointed an engagement lead, developed a strategy and invested in a specialist engagement team. It has a good understanding of its communities and supports this with a range of data. For example, the force identified an emerging Syrian refugee community in Redcar. The engagement team got in touch and offered their support. This helped the force better understand what the community needs. This is important in building trust among communities which might have low confidence in policing.

But the engagement team is responsible for some activity which would normally fall to local officers and staff. This is due to a lack of capacity in the neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs). Despite the engagement team's commitment, this isn't sustainable. If there is no additional NPT capacity, this could negatively affect the force's longer-term ability to effectively engage with the public.

The public is invited to have a say on local policing through an annual survey. There has been an increase in the diversity of respondents, although the force hasn't yet achieved its ambition to increase the number of surveys returned. The force also publishes ward newsletters which report on progress against local priorities.

We found good examples of local engagement activity. For example, 'Chill with the Bill' is an initiative where police community support officers (PCSOs) visit local schools and read with the children as a way to encourage engagement with young people.

The force has an established strategic [independent advisory group](#) which is essential to supporting the force's commitment to continual improvement. This meeting is well attended by senior police leaders and is evidence of a significant commitment to effective community engagement.

The force is working to improve its understanding of how and why to treat the public with fairness and respect

The force recognises the importance of [unconscious bias](#) training and has invested in a revised online training product. The force monitors participation and is on track to achieve its March 2023 completion date for all officers and staff. We found that the force had made sure that effective communication elements feature consistently in force training products.

There is a commitment to improve the experience of people who don't speak English who are brought into custody. The force has developed, with an external provider, a bespoke training product for custody staff. At the time of our inspection, this training was being implemented, and we look forward to seeing the benefits of this in future inspections.

The force has established an equality, diversity and inclusion team. The team helps staff recognise people's different needs and has introduced a range of initiatives. For example, staff are invited to take part in 'lunch and learn' sessions – eating lunch together while listening to an invited speaker. These events are insightful and well attended. We encourage the force to consider making these sessions part of its regular training programme for all officers and staff.

The force uses stop and search fairly most of the time

Cleveland Police provides stop and search training to student officers and tells officers about changes in legislation or practice. Officers complete online refresher training annually and participation is monitored.

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 223 stop and search records from 1 January to 31 December 2021. On the basis of this sample, we estimate that 80.7 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 5.1 percent) of all stop and searches by the force during this period had reasonable grounds recorded. This is broadly unchanged compared with the findings from our previous review of records from 2019, where we found 83.0 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 4.6 percent) of stop and searches had reasonable grounds recorded. Of the records we reviewed for stop and searches on people from ethnic minorities, 14 of 18 records had reasonable grounds recorded.

The force monitors its use of stop and search

The force has appointed a strategic lead for stop and search who chairs a regular internal scrutiny meeting.

The force produces detailed data which is used to inform an assessment of how fairly it uses stop and search. This data also supports the process where supervisors review body-worn video. But the force could do more analysis of search objectives and how often they are achieved to help it better understand disproportionality.

The force is working to improve its external scrutiny of stop and search. During our inspection, we found arrangements didn't meet the expected standard. The force responded to this feedback immediately and conducted a review. The refreshed external scrutiny panel, which covers stop and search and use of force, is well attended and representative of the local community. Volunteers who attend are given training to help them give effective feedback. And the force uses this information to improve how it treats the public. It is too early to assess how well this is working, but we look forward to seeing the results in future inspections.

The force has improved how it records use of force

The force has appointed a strategic lead for use of force who chairs a regular internal scrutiny meeting. The force's arrangements for external scrutiny are combined with stop and search.

We found that the force had made considerable improvements in how it records use of force. The force produces detailed data to inform senior leaders about compliance with force policy. Supervisors are required to complete a monthly review of the use of body-worn video where force has been used and report where expected standards haven't been met. They give shift briefings about common themes to support officers' learning. As a result, in the year ending 31 March 2021, there was a 37 percent increase in use of force incidents recorded compared to the previous year. It is important to note that this isn't an increase in the frequency with which officers use force but evidence of greater transparency in how that use is recorded.

Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour

Inadequate

Cleveland Police is inadequate at prevention and deterrence.

Cause of concern

The force hasn't fully addressed the cause of concern about preventing crime and antisocial behaviour identified in the 2019 PEEL inspection.

Recommendations

Cleveland Police should take immediate steps to:

- provide strategic direction and co-ordination of all prevention activity;
- integrate preventative practice across the organisation and provide the capacity and capability to carry out structured problem-solving and prevention activity aligned with its priorities; and
- raise the organisational profile of evidence-based policing, thoroughly evaluate problem-orientated activity, and arrange the storage and sharing of good practice.

The force has an established governance structure for local policing, but we found that this disproportionately focused on demand with only limited emphasis on prevention. Where data indicated changes in reporting, we didn't find enough analytical insight to explain why. Senior leaders rarely link data fluctuations to activity and aren't routinely expected to account for how they plan to mitigate emerging risks. As a result, prevention activity is sometimes carried out in isolation. We recognise this has been made worse by significant instability caused by vacancies within the chief officer team, despite the force's best efforts to address this. The force has made good progress in other areas, and we are confident that once stability is restored, the strategic direction that is required will also be restored.

The force also needs to do more to determine the causes of crime and vulnerability and take a problem-solving approach to address these. Problem-solving is encouraged but in practice it isn't applied consistently. We found some plans had no or only partial analysis of the problem and there were missed opportunities to involve partner organisations. Actions were often only considered for high-visibility patrols. Officers and staff have an inconsistent understanding of problem-solving, and some lack the necessary knowledge to apply the methodology effectively. Although we found some examples of problem-orientated policing used outside neighbourhood policing teams, this approach is generally viewed as a tool only for neighbourhood officers.

We recognise the provision of preventative policing methods such as problem-solving has been significantly reduced. This is primarily due to neighbourhood policing team staff being moved away from their primary duties to support other frontline officers to meet daily demand.

The force needs to do more to evaluate its problem-solving and take an evidence-based approach to prevention activity. We found limited evidence that the force properly evaluates its activity to determine what has worked. Good practice is also rarely shared. In Hartlepool, we found some good examples of multi-agency problem-solving activity, but this wasn't consistently seen across the force. Plans aren't always visible to everyone, and there is limited guidance available to officers and staff.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to prevention and deterrence.

Neighbourhood policing officers and staff understand vulnerability in their areas

We found that neighbourhood policing officers and staff had a good understanding of vulnerability in their assigned areas. Officers have access to iMAP, an analytical mapping tool that can help them identify vulnerable people and those who present a risk to the public by area. We found good examples of how this greater awareness was protecting vulnerable people locally. In one case we saw, a PCSO spotted a young person leaving an address before getting into a nearby vehicle. The PCSO knew the address was connected to drug activity and that the young person was at risk of exploitation, so they arranged for the vehicle to be stopped. Evidence was found that suggested the young person was being criminally exploited, and the adult occupant of the vehicle was arrested.

Vulnerability is a key theme in the force's briefings. And local tasking and co-ordination processes are used to increase local awareness of vulnerable people and those presenting risk. But the safeguarding team doesn't always attend. This means that the reasons for tasks aren't always clear.

The force has a limited understanding of the demand facing its neighbourhood policing teams and can't meet this

On a daily basis, neighbourhood officers and staff are taken away from their core roles to support response policing colleagues. This includes occasions where PCSOs are dispatched to incidents as first responders. This is outside the normal expectation of their role. As a result, neighbourhood staff spend a fraction of their time on problem-solving, community engagement and targeted activity.

The force understands what crimes and incidents are allocated to neighbourhood teams, but there is limited understanding of some internally created demand. For example, we found that NPTs were often the go-to resource for other departments to assign routine enquiries or checks. And, when it wasn't clear which department should deal with tasks, these were often allocated to NPTs. This includes the dismantling of cannabis farms which, given the prevalence of this crime type in Cleveland, has a significant effect on NPTs' capacity.

The force needs to do more to understand its internal demand. We recognise that the lack of NPT capacity is in part due to past decisions to redeploy neighbourhood officers to response teams. But this situation means prevention activity is limited and it contributes to the force's current inability to reduce demand. Although the force has reintroduced the neighbourhood policing role, demand has continued to rise beyond what its currently available resources can now effectively manage.

The force doesn't properly recognise the contribution of neighbourhood policing teams

Neighbourhood policing officers and staff are hard-working, committed and highly motivated to serve the public. For example, in Hartlepool we found evidence of an effective multi-agency approach to antisocial behaviour. Neighbourhood officers and staff work closely with local authority early intervention officers to prevent young people on the cusp of offending getting into trouble, and they have a good understanding of the [OSARA](#) (objective, scanning, analysis, review and assess) model.

But the persistent removal of neighbourhood officers from their primary duties seriously undermines the ability of NPTs to fulfil their function. And this has left staff feeling undervalued. We found limited evidence of reward and recognition for successful neighbourhood policing beyond that offered by first and second-line managers. As a result, the force doesn't fully understand the role of NPTs in reducing threat, risk and harm and keeping people safe.

Many officers we spoke to had received limited training or [continuing professional development](#) for the neighbourhood policing role. The force has taken steps to address this and introduced a policing communities training course. This is evidence of progress in terms of recognising the skills required for successful neighbourhood policing, but we would encourage the force to fully evaluate it to make sure it is achieving its objectives.

Responding to the public

Adequate

Cleveland Police is adequate at responding to the public.

Innovative practice

The force has a good understanding of vulnerability at first point of contact

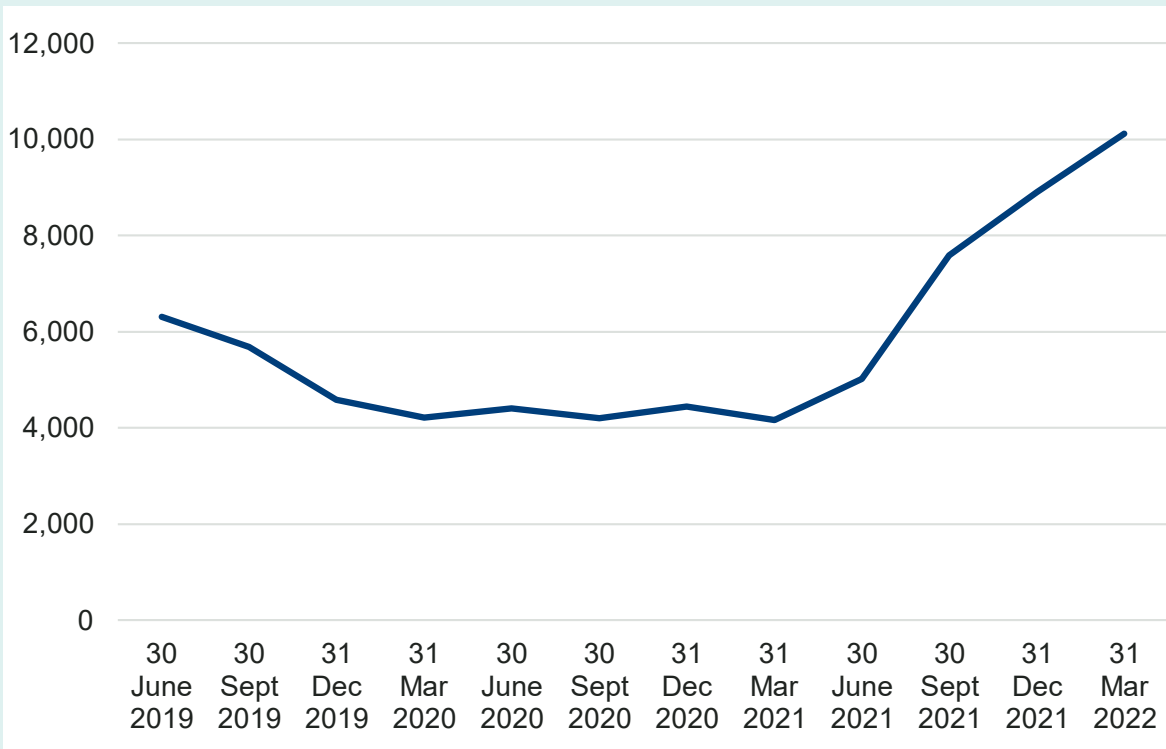
The force has created a vulnerability desk in its [force control room](#). The desk is staffed by police officers supported by an [independent domestic violence advocate](#) and a mental health nurse. Both roles provide professional advice and guidance to control room staff and first responders. This has helped the force improve how it responds to people who have mental health problems or are in crisis, and to provide prompt support and intervention. The desk also reviews all [domestic abuse](#)-related incidents and makes sure risk has been properly identified. Relevant information is reviewed, and first responders are informed so they have the right information to make their decisions. If appropriate, the independent domestic violence advocate provides immediate support to the victim over the phone. The desk considers whether the criteria for the [domestic violence disclosure scheme](#) are met and, if safe to do so, make that disclosure without delay. Following attendance, first responders contact the desk and complete a question set which makes sure all information, especially that concerning children in the household, is recorded. This has improved how the force assesses the risk to victims of domestic abuse and has made sure victims and their children are swiftly referred to supporting agencies.

The force has developed its own technology to support the identification of repeat callers and victims

The force has developed a software application which quickly identifies repeat callers and victims. When a call is received, the software automatically checks the number against force systems and alerts the call taker to previous incidents, flags or markers. The caller taker then uses this information when applying THRIVE. If the caller is a third party, the application runs the same check against a named victim or location. This is an effective way of identifying potential risk and vulnerability and making sure callers receive the right response.

Since March 2021, there has been a notable increase in the number of repeat caller incidents recorded. In the year ending 31 March 2021, 4,155 repeat caller incidents were recorded. Since then, the number of incidents has continued to increase, reaching 10,112 in the year ending 31 March 2022.

Figure 1: Repeat caller incidents recorded by Cleveland Police from the year ending 30 June 2019 to the year ending 31 March 2022



Area for improvement

The force needs to attend calls for service, particularly those involving vulnerable people, within its published time frames and should fully update victims when this doesn't happen

As part of our victim service assessment, we found that in 11 of the 53 cases reviewed the force failed to meet its own incident response targets. And in 8 of the 12 relevant cases we reviewed, victims weren't updated about delays.

When a force makes a public commitment to attend incidents within a specific time frame and this commitment isn't met, there is a significant risk to public confidence in the service. Meeting this commitment is a considerable challenge for Cleveland Police given the disproportionate demand it faces compared to other areas – and its current capacity to meet that demand. Although the force has made good progress in this area, more needs to be done.

We recognise the force is already improving the way it updates callers when there are delays. We look forward to seeing the results of this in future inspections.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force responds to the public.

The force identifies and understands risk effectively at initial contact

In 75 of the 77 cases we reviewed, the force applied a structured approach to assessing risk. All force control room staff are trained in applying THRIVE. And call handlers are good at looking for, and identifying, vulnerability.

In 24 of the 26 cases we reviewed, the force recorded when a repeat caller or victim was identified. But in 15 of 70 relevant cases, it wasn't clear that this check had been made. The force may wish to consider recording that a caller or victim isn't a repeat. This will help incident managers make accurate decisions and provide the right response.

The force receives a high volume of calls. And there isn't a switchboard to divert non-incident-related demand away from the control room. It is working to improve the time it takes to answer 999 and [101](#) calls and to reduce the number of abandoned calls, although this is a significant challenge.

The force has invested in technology to direct callers who aren't reporting an incident to the right place, first time. The police and crime commissioner has provided funding for the development of a mobile phone application designed to give the public alternative ways to report incidents. This also aims to reduce non-police demand coming into the control room. It is too early to see the full effect of these initiatives, but we look forward to reviewing the benefits during future inspections.

The force manages online reporting well

The force offers a range of methods for the public to report crime, including online reporting (generally referred to as 'single online home'). The control room monitors this 24/7. We found online reports were well managed with THRIVE being applied at, or only very shortly after, the time the report was received. Where reports required a response, they moved through the control room swiftly for prioritisation.

The force control room is good at managing the well-being of its staff

The control room has a positive culture. The majority of staff we spoke to described being happy at work and proud to serve in Cleveland Police. Every member of staff described feeling supported by supervisors and managers and would be confident when raising a well-being issue. We found strong evidence that senior leaders, managers and supervisors recognise the potential for trauma in the control room, and support services are well understood.

The force offers regular professional development to staff, and there is a dedicated control room training co-ordinator. Staff help shape training content and are invited to make suggestions, which managers and senior leaders take on board.

The force has improved how it updates callers

In 8 of the 12 cases we reviewed, callers weren't updated when the response was delayed. A failure to keep victims of crime updated presents a serious risk to public confidence. We reported this to the force which responded immediately, reviewed processes and put a solution in place. We are pleased to report the force now recontacts callers after 90 minutes and then every 4 hours after that. At each point, staff reapply THRIVE to identify any change in risk or prioritisation.

The force could do more to manage crime scenes effectively

In 33 of the 35 cases reviewed, we found control room call takers provided good crime scene and evidence preservation advice. But there were missed opportunities to make best use of the force's forensic resources. Staff told us that due to demand, decisions are often made to remove evidence from a scene rather than preserve it in situ and seek the support of a crime scene investigator. This can undermine the integrity of evidence and presents risks to securing positive outcomes for victims. We encourage the force to consider ways to raise officers' and staff's forensic awareness and make better use of its forensic resources.

Investigating crime

Requires
improvement

Cleveland Police requires improvement at investigating crime.

Areas for improvement

The force should make sure investigation plans are created where applicable, with supervisory oversight making sure that all investigative opportunities are taken and appropriate investigations are carried out

In 8 of the 54 cases we reviewed, investigations lacked an investigation plan and weren't regularly reviewed to make sure inquiries were conducted promptly. This can lead to slow and incomplete investigations.

The force needs to make sure that it complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

Forces are expected to conduct a victim needs assessment to make sure they provide the best service possible. In 17 of the 79 applicable cases we reviewed, a victim needs assessment was missing.

A victim personal statement gives victims a voice in the criminal justice process by providing an opportunity to explain how the crime has affected them. This might be physically, emotionally, psychologically, financially or in some other way. In 7 of the 11 applicable cases we reviewed, that opportunity hadn't been provided.

The force needs to improve its governance and monitoring processes to make sure that the use of outcomes is appropriate and complies with force and national policies

We reviewed 20 cases where a suspect was identified, and the victim supported police action, but evidential difficulties prevented further action (outcome 15). Of these, 11 were unsuitable for this outcome. This included six cases which the primary crime investigation unit had screened out. So no investigation took place despite there being clear lines of inquiry available and victims who supported further action.

We reviewed 20 cases where a suspect was identified, but there were evidential difficulties, and the victim didn't support or withdrew their support for police action (outcome 16). Of these, we found that on five occasions the outcome had been incorrectly applied. When a suspect has been identified but the victim doesn't support or withdraws their support for police action, an auditable record from the victim should be held confirming their decision. In 13 of the 20 cases reviewed, we found no auditable record of the victim's wish to withdraw support.

We reviewed 20 cases when the crime had been investigated, no suspect had been identified and the investigation was closed (outcome 18). Of these, we found that on five occasions the outcome had been incorrectly applied. In 10 of 12 relevant cases, there was no rationale why potential lines of inquiry hadn't been followed, and investigation plans were missing.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force investigates crime.

The force needs to provide a higher quality of investigation on behalf of victims of crime and their families

We recognise Cleveland Police has made improvements since our last inspection, but more needs to be done.

In nearly all cases we reviewed (89 of 90 cases), we found that allocation was made to appropriate teams in accordance with the crime allocation policy. Despite this, investigations weren't always effective. And 18 of 87 relevant cases failed to achieve the investigative standards expected.

In 30 of 34 relevant cases, the force was effective at making prompt arrests. But 12 of 90 investigations took longer than necessary.

There are some occasions when, for very different and personal reasons, victims don't feel they can support an investigation by providing evidence themselves. In these cases, the force should maximise evidence from other lines of inquiry and, wherever possible, bring offenders to justice. But in 14 of 19 cases where evidence-led prosecutions were possible, this didn't happen.

Supervisory oversight of investigations isn't always effective

To effectively investigate serious and complex crime, officers and staff must achieve a professional accreditation called [professionalising investigations programme \(PIP\)](#) level 2.

Cleveland Police has 413 PIP2 investigator posts. As of 31 March 2022, only 23 percent of these were filled with accredited investigators. We recognise the challenges that forces face in attracting staff to detective roles. But this experience gap means the effective supervision of investigations is even more important. We found occasions where the level of supervision needed to improve. In 16 of 75 relevant cases we reviewed, we found there wasn't enough evidence that the investigator was given advice and guidance or that there was supervisory oversight of investigative actions. The force has introduced some new initiatives to improve investigations. We encourage the force to evaluate these initiatives to provide reassurance that it is meeting the objectives set.

Protecting vulnerable people

Requires
improvement

Cleveland Police requires improvement at protecting vulnerable people.

Areas for improvement

The force should improve its capability to identify hidden harm, particularly in instances where children go missing

The force receives a high number of [missing from home](#) reports, many of which concern children. Some elements of the force's response are satisfactory, but we found officers didn't consistently demonstrate the level of professional curiosity required to properly identify potential harm. The force has improved its development of [trigger plans](#) to inform the immediate response when a child goes missing, but these were rarely used. Similarly, investigation plans were generic and not tailored to what was known about the child or the circumstances in which they had been reported missing. We found that officers were sometimes quick to accept what a child told them or to record that the child wouldn't engage. A better understanding of hidden harm will avoid missed opportunities to protect children and help preventative work capable of reducing the force's missing from home demand.

The force should improve the way it manages MARAC referrals and make sure safeguarding processes are properly risk assessed and approved at the appropriate level

As of 31 March 2022, 31 percent of the force's active domestic abuse investigations were assessed as high risk, compared to 14 percent across England and Wales. Despite this, in the year ending 31 March 2022, the force discussed 809 [multi-agency risk assessment conference \(MARAC\)](#) cases. This is below the [SafeLives](#) recommended number to discuss of 930, based on the force's local population.

Where many forces have chosen to increase the number of MARAC meetings to meet demand, Cleveland Police has maintained the frequency and instead adopted a screening process. We found this process needs to improve. We saw there is some guidance for decision-makers, but there are no specific criteria for screening referrals, which appears to be a legacy decision. We found no record of this decision being taken at a force level or properly risk assessed. Referrers from partner organisations are informed of decisions to screen out and invited to provide additional information which might change that assessment. But the decision-making was left to police. We found evidence that middle managers had tried to establish a multi-agency decision-making process without success. There was no evidence they had been supported by senior leaders.

When cases don't reach MARAC there is a risk that information isn't effectively shared among safeguarding partners, and vulnerable people are placed at even greater risk. And when the police make such decisions in isolation, the valuable perspective of our partners is lost. The current process also presents some risk to the force, and responsibility for this isn't held at the appropriate level.

The force should improve how it shares safeguarding information with partner organisations

The force contributes to a co-located safeguarding function in each of its local authority areas. The purpose is to make sure information is shared promptly and given the right multi-agency approach. We found that all four safeguarding hubs immediately send child concern [public protection notices](#) to children's services regardless of the content, level of risk or action required. As the public protection notices aren't read before being sent on, no research or assessment of risk takes place. Children's services then notify Cleveland Police of anything requiring further discussion. This means risks may not be identified at the earliest opportunity and places a significant burden on a single agency to progress the referral.

Police forces should take part in all adult concern multi-agency strategy discussions. But we found that the force didn't always do this. Some strategy discussion invitations sent to the force's complex exploitation team were refused or received no response. We recognise that this is likely due to serious capacity issues in the complex exploitation team. But the force should consider plans to make sure there is capacity to take part in multi-agency information-sharing practices. This will help avoid risks escalating and vulnerable people coming to further harm.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects vulnerable people.

The force has improved how effective it is at identifying vulnerable people

Since our last inspection, the force has improved how effective it is at identifying vulnerable people. The majority of officers and staff we spoke to have a good understanding of vulnerability. The force monitors the submission of safeguarding referrals to make sure it alerts the right support services. This has had a positive effect, and referrals are consistently submitted on the day of an incident. We found that Cleveland Police had robust arrangements for managing officer referrals about [domestic abuse](#). The force conducts a secondary [risk assessment](#) to make sure victims receive the right service. A specialist safeguarding officer, of detective inspector rank or higher, oversees changes to the attending officer's risk assessment. We found no significant backlog of referrals. And in domestic abuse-related incidents where children are identified, referral to children's services consistently happens the same day. During our inspection, the force had already recognised that further work is needed to address the quality of referrals. It is working to improve this and we encourage it to continue to develop in this area.

The force has improved its local arrangements to protect children who have been exploited

The force has developed two multi-agency groups which are responsible for identifying and protecting exploited children:

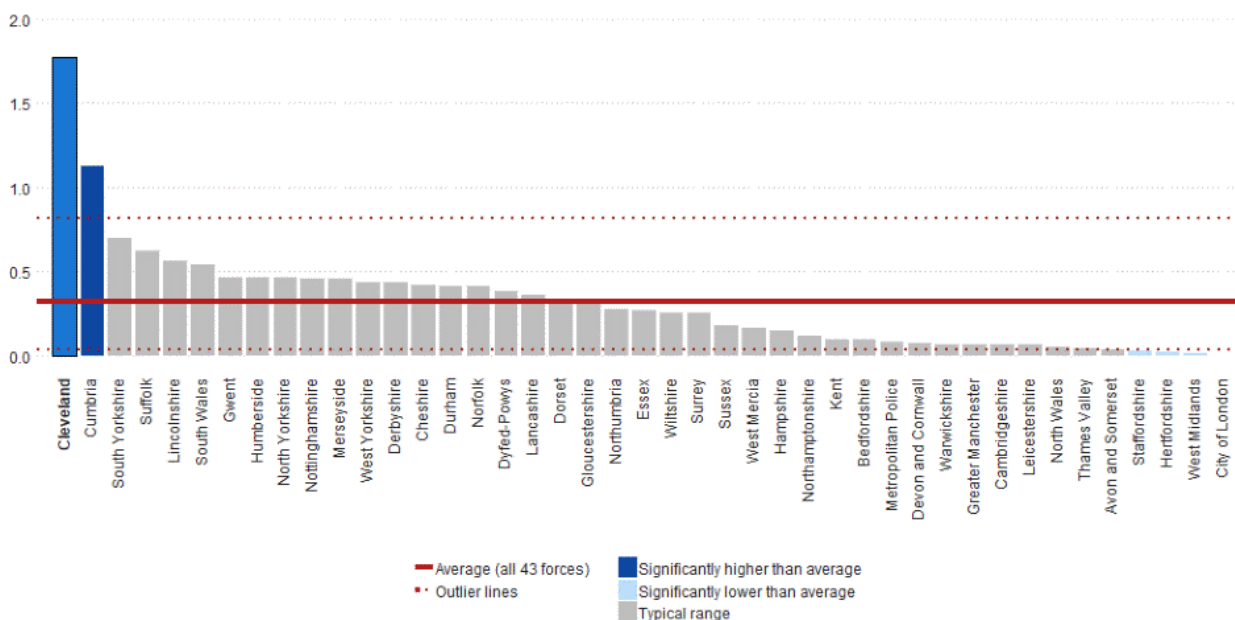
1. The multi-agency child exploitation group in the north; and
2. The vulnerable, exploited, missing and trafficked group in the south.

Both groups meet daily or every two days, and a range of partners involved in child protection attend. We found that information was shared effectively and appropriate actions set. The groups are well attended. To further strengthen its capability in protecting children from exploitation, the force should consider including NPTs in this process.

The force has improved how it uses available powers to protect vulnerable people

The force understands its use of powers to protect people, particularly those at risk of domestic abuse. Applications for disclosures according to the domestic violence disclosure scheme 'right to ask' and 'right to know' criteria are considered and prioritised by the domestic abuse solutions team.

Figure 2: Domestic violence disclosure scheme right to know applications per 1,000 population, for forces in England and Wales, in the year ending 31 March 2022



In the year ending 31 March 2022, Cleveland Police made 1,013 right to know applications. This equates to 1.8 applications per 1,000 population. This is the highest rate in England and Wales and is significantly higher than the average across all forces in England and Wales.

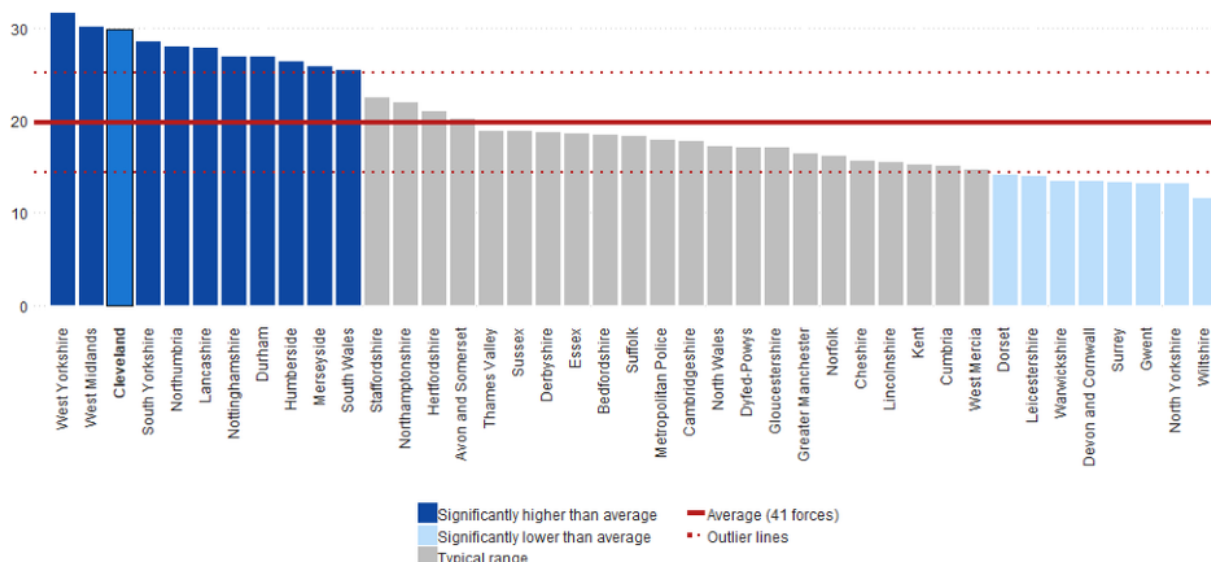
Since our last inspection, the force has increased how often it applies for [domestic violence protection orders \(DVPOs\)](#). In the year ending 31 March 2022, it applied for 138 DVPOs, compared to only 61 applications in the year ending 31 March 2020. During this inspection, we saw senior leaders encouraging the use of DVPOs. The domestic abuse solutions team also scans incidents and custody cases in the previous 24 hours to identify opportunities for DVPOs. Cleveland has a high incidence of domestic abuse. It is therefore critical that the force continues to improve in this area and make the best use of this powerful protective measure.

We did find some isolated examples where child sex offender disclosures hadn't been progressed as quickly as possible. We would urge the force to maintain focus on disclosure timescales and make sure that decisions to disclose are supported by prompt action.

Current demand is overwhelming the force's safeguarding capacity

In the year ending 31 March 2022, Cleveland Police identified 17,020 domestic abuse-related incidents, which equates to 29.9 incidents per 1,000 population. This is one of the highest rates in England and Wales and is significantly higher than the average across forces in England and Wales of 19.8 incidents per 1,000 population.

Figure 3: Domestic abuse-related incidents per 1,000 population, for forces in England and Wales, in the year ending 31 March 2022



Note: Hampshire Constabulary has been excluded from this chart due to incomplete data. City of London Police has also been excluded because it isn't comparable to other forces given its unique nature.

The safeguarding department investigates some of the most serious offences, including domestic abuse and child exploitation. The force told us that as of September 2022, the team had an overall vacancy rate of 33.3 percent. In the face of rising demand, we found this was having a serious effect on the force's capacity to always respond effectively to these complex challenges. For example, during our inspection the force declared a critical incident for its specialist domestic abuse investigative capacity and temporarily rerouted demand into other areas. Although there is still considerable work to do, the improvements made by the force are evidence of its overall commitment to keeping people safe despite these extraordinary challenges. Without additional capacity in this area, the force will struggle to achieve sustainable long-term improvements.

Managing offenders and suspects

Adequate

Cleveland Police is adequate at managing offenders and suspects.

Areas for improvement

The force should improve its use and ongoing management of bail and released under investigation

Most officers and staff recognise the use of [bail](#) as an effective protective measure. But there is evidence of demand influencing decisions in some areas. We found that only two suspects under investigation by the paedophile online investigation team were subject to bail conditions. This means that despite the nature of offences under investigation, there were no safeguarding measures to prevent those [released under investigation \(RUI\)](#) having contact with children. Officers we spoke to said delays in the time it takes to examine digital devices were a significant factor in those decisions.

In May 2022, 49 percent of bail cases had moved into RUI over the previous 12-month period, according to force data. There was often no accompanying rationale as to why bail conditions were no longer required. In the majority of cases, this occurred because investigations weren't being progressed. But this included investigations into domestic abuse, which is concerning. If bail and RUI aren't carefully managed, it can create missed opportunities to safeguard victims of crime.

The force should make sure that all indecent imagery of children investigations are risk assessed and regularly reassessed to check whether suspects have access to children and that action is taken to safeguard children

During our inspection, we found examples where [indecent imagery of children \(IloC\)](#) cases were assessed to be medium risk, despite the suspect having possible access to children. The rationale for those decisions was flawed and demand management, rather than risk to children, was the determining factor. The force needs to reassure itself that demand isn't influencing the risk management of IloC caseloads to the extent that children are being placed at avoidable risk.

There were only a few IloC case backlogs awaiting enforcement, but the oldest of these was three months. We found no evidence that this case had been subject to an ongoing risk review during that time. It is possible that new information or [intelligence](#) becomes available between the initial risk assessment and enforcement. This can escalate the perceived risk and cause a case to become a higher priority. When that ongoing review doesn't happen, information is missed and children are placed at increased risk.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages offenders and suspects.

The force effectively manages the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders, although it could improve supervision

We found that despite high caseloads, offender managers in the sex offender management unit (SOMU) maintained records and risk assessments to a consistently good standard.

We found the [reactive management](#) of dangerous offenders to be in line with [authorised professional practice \(APP\)](#). The force makes unannounced visits. And where breaches are identified, these are recorded as crimes and properly investigated. SOMU has an effective means of scrutinising its own performance. Although some offender visits were overdue, we found risk assessments and management plans were up to date.

The force promotes the examination of devices on a voluntary basis, but SOMU isn't equipped to triage devices at the scene. This is a gap in its overall approach to managing dangerous offenders.

We found the supervisory oversight of risk management plans didn't always meet the expected standard. In some cases, supervisor reviews were clearly a copy-and-paste form of words which lacked detail about the person managed. Reviews didn't always contain guidance for the offender manager about actions or direction to manage the risk. Supervisory reviews are necessary to make sure risks have been fully considered and there is an effective plan in place to mitigate them. But when a generic form of words is applied to all cases, the review doesn't fulfil its objective and the risk to the public is potentially increased.

SOMU capacity creates high caseloads for offender managers and influences operational decisions

The force told us that SOMU officers are carrying high caseloads – averaging 78 offenders per offender manager. This inevitably influences how the department operates. For example, the majority of offender visits are made by lone officers. This doesn't comply with APP. In one case, we found that a lone female officer had visited an offender whose index offence was rape of a female and who demonstrated misogynistic behaviours. When challenged, the force did provide evidence of occasions when risk management plans demanded a double-crewed visit. But staff told us that the currently available resources mean double-crewed visits aren't always possible.

Accurate risk management plans rely on detailed observation of the offender's environment. This is more difficult for offender managers working alone. APP is guidance and forces do have the discretion to step outside its recommendations. We recognise the force has sacrificed double crewing to make sure visits are prompt, and quality risk assessments and plans are made. It is a credit to the officers and staff doing this difficult work that SOMU is operating effectively in spite of capacity challenges. However, we encourage the force to review its position on single-crewed visits, making sure decisions are properly risk assessed and authorised at the appropriate level.

The force has improved its management of outstanding suspects, but there is more to do

The force has taken steps to improve its approach to apprehending outstanding suspects. And there is an expectation that high-harm offenders are apprehended quickly. This means in the year ending 31 March 2021, the force made 21 arrests per 1,000 population. This is the second highest arrest rate in England and Wales.

But we also found cases where outstanding suspects weren't apprehended as quickly as they could have been. Force policy on the circulation of outstanding suspects on the [police national computer](#) is inconsistently applied. A total figure of outstanding suspects is presented to the once-every-two-months crime and investigation delivery and assurance group, but overall, there isn't enough oversight. There are sometimes good reasons why a suspect can't be circulated. But some officers we spoke to gave rationale which was based on demand rather than risk. Delays in apprehending suspects mean the force misses opportunities to reduce offending and risks further harm to the community and, therefore, increased demand on its resources.

Disrupting serious organised crime

We now inspect [serious and organised crime \(SOC\)](#) on a regional basis, rather than inspecting each force individually in this area. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect the whole SOC system, as set out in HM Government's SOC strategy.

SOC is tackled by each force working with [regional organised crime units \(ROCUs\)](#). These units lead the regional response to SOC by providing access to specialist resources and assets to disrupt [organised crime groups](#) that pose the highest harm.

Through our new inspections we seek to understand how well forces and ROCUs work in partnership. As a result, we now inspect ROCUs and their forces together and report on regional performance. Forces and ROCUs are now graded and reported on in regional SOC reports.

Adequate

Cleveland Police is adequate at managing SOC. [You can access the regional report on our website.](#)

Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

Requires improvement

Cleveland Police requires improvement at building and developing its workforce.

Innovative practice

The force works collaboratively with a local academic organisation to recruit crime scene investigators and digital forensic technicians

The force works with Teesside University to provide potential employment opportunities for aspiring crime scene investigators (CSIs) and [digital forensic investigators \(DFIs\)](#). Forensic science students are given the opportunity to work alongside CSIs and DFIs in the force's scientific support department. This provides valuable work experience for students wishing to apply for future vacancies. Since its introduction, several CSI students have been successful in gaining employment, and seven out of the nine DFI students have been successful in obtaining a role within the department.

Areas for improvement

The force should improve its understanding of workforce well-being with a specific focus on reducing officer sickness

As of 31 March 2022, Cleveland Police had the highest rate of long-term sickness among police officers in England and Wales, at 4.0 percent. This is compared to 1.8 percent across all police officers in England and Wales. The force has some understanding of why officers are absent, but there is significantly less insight into patterns and themes of absence or plans to mitigate these. If it is to sustainably reduce officer sickness and improve workforce well-being, the force needs to properly understand what lies behind its people data and be clear on threats and risks to well-being.

Despite having a current well-being plan, we found the force didn't fully understand how its provision was making a difference. We found limited evidence of how the force evaluates what works, and this makes it difficult to fully assess the benefits of its well-being investments.

The force should make sure its operational planning fully considers the effect on officer and staff well-being. We found that a considerable number of proactive initiatives and pre-planned operations relied on officer overtime. The use of overtime is a legitimate means of resourcing police operations, but there was limited evidence that senior leaders took account of how this might affect well-being. By not making this assessment, the force could undermine its well-being offer.

The force should improve its understanding of what factors influence recruitment and retention

Although the force gathers a considerable amount of workforce data, we found there was a lack of insight to help it understand the reasons why people leave or drop out during the recruitment process. Instead, the force tended to speculate on factors rather than gather evidence and use it effectively. For example, exit interviews were usually only held when the leaver requested one.

We found the force didn't always anticipate the effect of police officer recruitment on police staff or volunteer roles. This means some posts lay vacant for long periods.

By understanding which factors influence retention, the force will be in a far stronger position to attract and retain talented individuals across the organisation.

We recognise the force has developed a retention strategy, but this wasn't available before the conclusion of our inspection.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force builds and develops its workforce.

The force has significantly improved its culture in respect of ethics and workforce understanding of expected behaviours

Since our last inspection, the force has made significant improvements in this area. It has established an effective ethics and standards board which provides a safe environment for officers and staff to raise ethical dilemmas. The board is well attended by a good cross-section of the organisation. Ethical advocates provide peer support to colleagues who may have witnessed a breach of behaviour standards or who are unsure how to progress an ethical dilemma. Senior leaders consistently promote acceptable standards of behaviour. And all officers and staff we spoke to understood what was expected of them.

The workforce has low confidence in the force's well-being offer

The force has faced significant challenges in resourcing its occupational health unit (OHU). Nationally, there is a low number of qualified OHU nurses. And there have been difficulties competing with the private sector when recruiting. This has led to there being several OHU nurse vacancies.

During summer 2022, the waiting time for an OHU appointment was more than 40 days. The force has been proactive in addressing this and has recruited registered nurses who will qualify as OHU nurses in post. It has also invited the [College of Policing](#) to review its well-being department and make recommendations on how it could improve. The force has put these in place. As a result, it has substantially reduced the OHU waiting time to an average of ten days. But workforce confidence in OHU is still low. Some officers and staff we spoke to said they wouldn't self-refer to OHU because waiting times are so long. The force should consider how it can reassure officers and staff about the well-being provision currently in place and the steps being taken to improve it.

The force can make better use of its performance development review process

There is some evidence that the force promotes participation in its performance development review (PDR) process. But less than half (46 percent) of the workforce have a current objective to work towards. PDRs are essential to the continuing professional development of staff. The force has developed a leadership programme linked to the PDR. This is good progress. But it is important that officers and staff less motivated by promotion aren't overlooked and that the force promotes the benefits of a current PDR to all.

Force recruitment is limited to a single-entry route

The force has met its police uplift programme targets for years one and two of the programme. But it doesn't offer different entry routes to potential recruits and so it has fallen behind most other forces. Since the introduction of the policing education qualifications framework, it has only offered the police constable degree apprenticeship. It is considering putting additional entry routes in place in 2023.

Cleveland is a geographically small area. This means those who live, work and study in the area can reasonably travel to several neighbouring forces. By offering fewer entry routes, the force potentially places itself at a disadvantage in recruiting the best candidates for the constable role. As there is no degree entry route, those already possessing a degree qualification are required by the police constable degree apprenticeship criteria to study for a further qualification. This means officers are taken away from their primary roles. We recognise that instability at chief officer level has made it difficult to put additional entry routes in place. Once fully resolved, the force will be in a stronger position to implement a more sustainable recruitment strategy. We look forward to seeing the benefits of this in future inspections.

Vetting and counter corruption

We now inspect how forces deal with vetting and counter corruption differently. This is so we can be more effective and efficient in how we inspect this high-risk area of police business.

Corruption in forces is tackled by specialist units, designed to proactively target corruption threats. Police corruption is corrosive and poses a significant risk to public trust and confidence. There is a national expectation of standards and how they should use specialist resources and assets to target and arrest those that pose the highest threat.

Through our new inspections, we seek to understand how well forces apply these standards. As a result, we now inspect forces and report on national risks and performance in this area. We now grade and report on forces' performance separately.

Cleveland Police's vetting and counter corruption inspection hasn't yet been completed. We will update our website with our findings and the separate report once the inspection is complete.

Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money

Inadequate

Cleveland Police is inadequate at operating efficiently.

Cause of concern

The force hasn't fully addressed the cause of concern relating to strategic planning, organisational management and value for money identified in its 2019 PEEL inspection

Recommendations

Cleveland Police should continue to develop:

- its assessment of current and potential future demand across all operational areas to inform the force's operating model. This should include latent demand and the demand generated by internal processes; and
- co-ordinated financial and workforce plans based on demand, which should be integrated into the force's strategic planning cycle.

During our inspection, we found that Cleveland Police had made some progress. But it still needs to develop a thorough understanding of demand to underpin its strategic planning. For this reason, the previous cause of concern is unmet and remains in place.

Cleveland Police doesn't adequately understand the demand it faces. A thorough understanding of demand is required to underpin all strategic planning. This means it doesn't presently have the coherent workforce and financial plans it needs to meet demand and provide the necessary results.

We recognise that instability among chief officer ranks for a sustained period is a significant factor in this cause of concern having not yet been addressed. We have been encouraged by the progress made under the leadership of a new chief constable and remain confident that with the right support, these recommendations will be met.

Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force operates efficiently.

The force lacks consistent strategic leadership and effective plans that will allow it to move forward effectively

We were pleased to see the progress Cleveland Police has made in relation to its performance structures and data. It has invested in systems and processes to give a better understanding of data and insight, and established governance is now in place. However, we found a gap in some aspects of force planning, and some plans aren't yet in place. For example, the force has recently begun a review of its operating model and support functions. This work is in progress and the force told us it expects this to be finalised by April 2023. The force should make sure that this work is completed to assure itself it has the plans and capability to provide services effectively to its communities.

Since our last inspection, the force has experienced a further change of chief constable. The lack of consistency across the entire chief officer team has affected the confidence of the wider workforce in its senior leadership. However, the change and structures currently being put in place show that the force is developing a more sustainable approach to leadership. And this will support strategic changes more effectively in the future.

The force understands incoming demand well but needs to develop a more detailed understanding of overall demand

The force understands its incoming demand. And it supports response by using its resources flexibly across the force area. The quality of available data has also improved, and this helps the force understand demand in more detail.

But it needs to do more work to properly understand demand coming from other areas, such as safe and well visits or mental health, as well as demand generated by inefficient practices. It also needs to better understand the effect incoming demand has on other areas of policing. For example, the force's escalation policy means its neighbourhood officers and staff are routinely taken away from their primary duties to support response colleagues. This means the neighbourhood role isn't always providing what is required. This affects problem-solving capacity and how the force achieves its priorities.

The force is developing its datasets to help understand these challenges. It should make sure that the data is supported by effective insight to help make decisions about resourcing.

The force lacks an understanding of capability and capacity

The force has improved its understanding of capability, and this is mapped through performance and the [force management statement \(FMS\)](#). But it needs to do more to understand capacity and how wider resources support its effectiveness. The force should make sure it has a detailed picture of the capability and capacity of its total resources. The current lack of detail means that resources aren't always used in the best way.

At the time of our inspection, the force lacked a detailed fleet strategy and estates strategy. It needs to better understand the wider non-human resources available. And this needs to be aligned with an understanding of demand and a comprehensive workforce plan. This will help the force to better consider its resources and make sure it is in the best position to meet its demand with the assets it has.

The force has improved its understanding of future demand

The FMS shows that the force has improved its understanding of future demand. The senior leaders we spoke to support the FMS, although we found it wasn't always consistently understood.

The force should invest in the FMS by applying what it has learned across the force area. This will help provide an overview of what the force needs to meet different challenges across different areas. The force should do further work to consider all its resource needs to manage anticipated demand.

The force lacks a detailed financial plan that shows it can meet future demands

The force presents a balanced financial budget. There is a good level of fiscal management, and the force has sound fiscal awareness. However, senior leaders don't have any autonomy and there's little flexibility for the force to innovate. The force recognises that the level of financial management is too restrictive and is taking steps to address this. The force might consider how it can support senior leaders with an awareness of financial management. It might also consider how it can provide confidence to the finance team that senior leaders understand the financial challenges that exist in policing.

Finance isn't effectively aligned with priorities. The force doesn't have an efficiency savings plan. It also lacks an understanding of whether the benefits of investments have been achieved, so it is hard to see how they are providing value for money. The force should make sure that plans are aligned with priorities to provide it with the confidence that investments and expenditure are helping achieve its priorities effectively.

The force actively seeks opportunities to improve services through collaboration and makes the most of the benefits of this in line with its statutory obligations

As a smaller force, Cleveland Police recognises that it can provide some services more cost-effectively by working with others. There is an appetite to evaluate new opportunities, and collaborations are in place. But it isn't clear that there are enough reviews to help decision-making or that effective business cases are in place to understand if collaborations are implementing what was originally agreed. For example, the withdrawal of the firearms collaboration has resulted in the need for further investment in resources to drive daily operation. And it isn't clear that a considered case was presented to make sure the force exited this arrangement cost-effectively.

The force is continuing to achieve efficiency savings and improve productivity

The force is making good progress in the use of technology. It has improved its use of data and tools to help it understand demand and performance in more detail. It has also improved technology by increasing investment in the force control room and providing laptops to staff. There is a clear commitment to support staff with technology.

But the force lacks the ability to make sure that it gets the full benefit from this investment. The force should make sure it understands benefits and productivity. This will help it understand if it is operating more effectively and where it needs to place resources. The force is failing to realise the efficiencies which could allow it to invest in other areas.

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